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UNCLAS ATHENS 000603

SIPDIS

MARAD FOR ACTING MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR JOHN JAMIAN FROM
AMBASSADOR RIES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [GR](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF GREECE REQUESTS DONATION OF EC2 TYPE
LIBERTY SHIP FOR MUSEUM

1. (U) I am writing to ask your help.

2. (U) I recently met with the Greek Minister of Merchant Marine Emmanuel Kefaloyiannis, who has been of great assistance to us in the war on terrorism. Under his leadership, the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) did a superb job in protecting our athletes and VIPs during the Olympics and the HCG has continued to provide exemplary cooperation on port security and non-proliferation in the months since.

3. (U) The Minister requested my assistance in securing the donation of a WWII-era EC2 type Liberty Ship to become a floating museum in the port of Piraeus, near Athens, Greece. There is strong sentimental attachment to Liberty ships in Greece as Liberty ships sold by the USG at the end of the Second World War formed the basis of what became the modern Greek merchant marine fleet. The late Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis is perhaps the most famous purchaser, buying sixteen to revitalize his shipping fleet.

4. (U) I understand that there is still an EC2 type Liberty Ship, the Arthur M. Huddell, in the National Readiness Reserve Fleet in the James River. I would like to ask for your help in securing a donation of this or another Liberty ship for the Government of Greece. With a Greek government imprimatur, and with the support of wealthy Greek shipowners, we believe that the Greek side would have no problem in quickly raising the necessary funds to prepare the Arthur M. Huddell for safe transport across the Atlantic and for its restoration.

5. (U) The donation of this vessel would provide valuable political goodwill and public diplomacy opportunities for the USG. A Liberty ship museum in Piraeus would prominently, and permanently, highlight the positive aspects of the U.S.-Greek relationship, and document the U.S. role in helping Greece to its pre-eminent position in the merchant shipping world today. Let me know what we need to do to make this happen. Sincerely, Charlie Ries.
RIES